

PROJECT ESSAY

DEVELOPMENT OF A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM
IN THE ABUNDANT LIFE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD .

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Submitted by

David L. Craun

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Interdenominational Theological Center
Atlanta, Georgia

Approved by: [REDACTED]

Date: April 15, 1971

Dean

Approved: [REDACTED]

Faculty Adviser

Date: April 15, 1971

Approved: [REDACTED]

Professor, Department, Christian Education

Date: April 15, 1971

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PREFACE

Upon my arrival in the Atlanta area I was invited by a friend who had come to Atlanta a few weeks prior to attend the Abundant Life Assemblies of God in Decatur, Georgia. When I attended the first service, I sensed a great need. The church had such great possibilities, but needed workers to help build the church, both physically and spiritually.

It was then that I wanted to spend my time in Atlanta working in this new church. After conveying my feelings to the pastor, he asked me to be the Sunday School Superintendent. It is in this position that I have fulfilled my field education requirements at the Interdenominational Theological Center; and it is this work at Abundant Life that has provided the context for this essay.

Due recognition is here given to Mrs. Shantilata Yohan and Dr. Josephus R. Coan who have both given me inspiration and priceless instruction.

I also wish to make known my deep feeling of appreciation for the help my wife offered both in the typing of this work and in making my studies at the Interdenominational Theological Center possible. To my wife Ammie Ruth I here dedicate this work.

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I. THE SETTING

The Church's History

The Abundant Life Tabernacle started as a dream of one man called of God to build a church in the Metropolitan Atlanta area. When The Reverend Kenneth Crocker first came to the Atlanta area, he was told that it would be a miracle if he could fulfill what he felt was God's purpose for him. Other men had tried, but failed. Yet with a burning desire to fulfill his dream, he started acting accordingly.

The old Civic Building in Decatur, Georgia became the temporary meeting place for the small congregation. There, in the Civic Building, converts were won to Christ. Some of those converts are central figures in the Church today. The Church grew slowly, but there was a determination in both the pastor and the congregation to go forward for Christ and be a part in the completion of a miracle.

Then the day came. The land that had been desired, yet was not for sale, became available. Where would the money come from? Could a small congregation afford such a debt? The answers to these questions were granted through sacrifice. The Reverend Crocker sold his personal airplane for the amount needed to purchase the land and start the building. He was so convinced that God had called him to build a church, that

he gave up the thing he most loved -- his airplane. Would God honor this sacrifice? Yes, for it is that land that has seen the building of a church on Snapfinger Road, Decatur, Georgia.

The foundations were poured, the plans started, but not without difficulty. When responsibility came to some of those in the congregation, they were not able to meet it. Although everyone agreed to help in the building by donating time and labor, it was left up to a very few to do the work. When the writer arrived in the fall of 1969 the auditorium had just a roof, concrete floor, and unfinished walls. The educational building still needed finishing, but services had been held there for two years with only a minimal growth.

All this time, the congregation was not able to support this building financially. Thus, the pastor instituted a forty thousand dollar bond issue in June of 1968. At the time of this writing there still remain several bond series to be purchased. Since the slow down in the nation's economy made it difficult to sell the rest of the bonds, a loan was received after several months of delay. This made it possible to move into the auditorium. From that time on the Church has grown steadily, but slowly. Financing problems are constantly present, but with continued growth, the Church will eventually be able to broaden its outreach to other churches which need assistance.

ABUNDANT LIFE TABERNACLE
INCORPORATED
DECATUR, GEORGIA

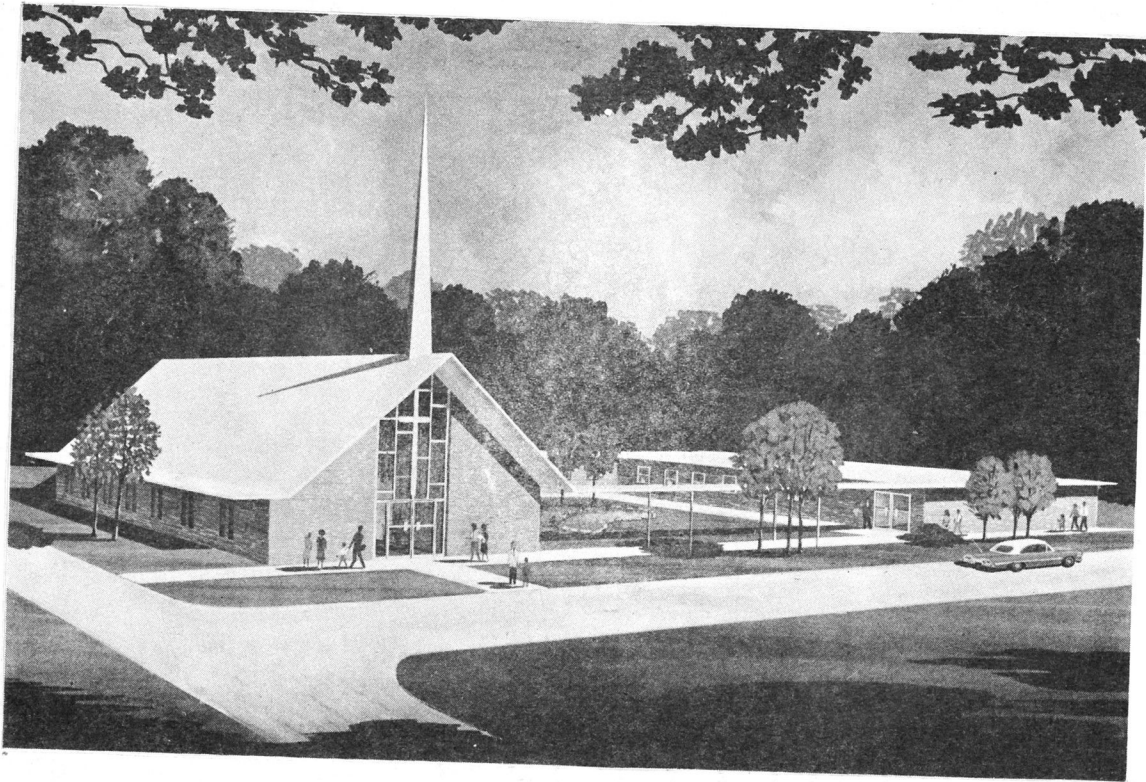


Fig. 1--Architectural
Drawing of Abundant Life

The Church Structure

The church building is of a modern style. It is built of light tones of brick with white trimming. Tinted glass is used in the sanctuary, and plenty of windows have been installed in the educational building. Only the back wing to the educational building has been completed at present. When church growth requires it, the side and possibly a front wing will be added.¹

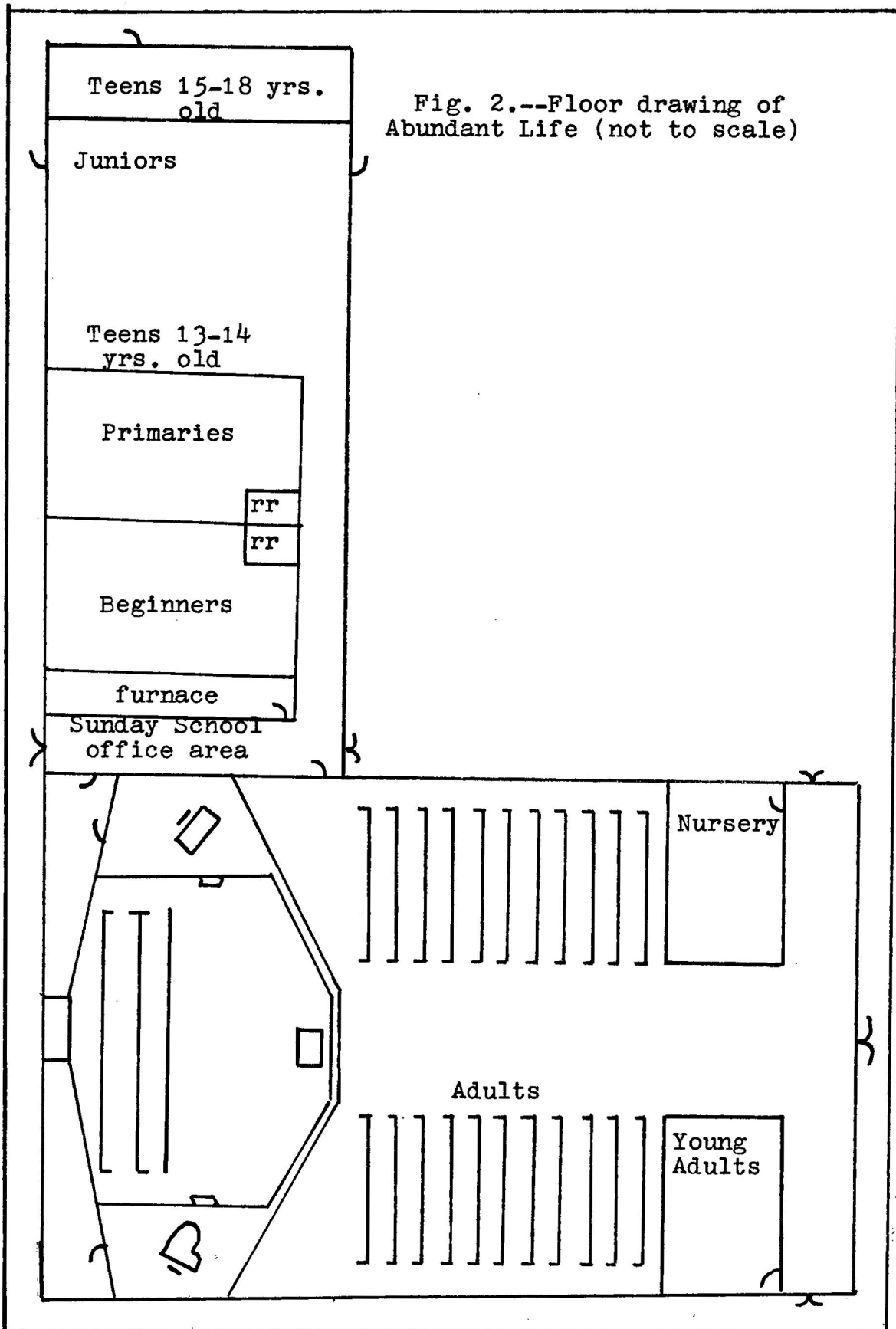
The interior is of a modern design. In the sanctuary the side walls are of the same brick as the exterior. There are two rooms at the entrance, one a class room, the other the nursery. These are paneled on the outside and painted light tones on the inside. The floor is completely carpeted except for the entrance way, and there is an open platform with a choir loft that seats thirty. Behind the choir loft is paneled walls from the floor up about six feet, with wall paper from there up. In the center of this wall is the baptistry which will have a mural of a dove sweeping overhead. The cushioned pews have been a welcome addition to the church.²

The Congregation

The congregation has grown in size over the past year. When the meetings were held in the Civic Building there were almost fifty persons in attendance. Yet when the writer ar-

¹See figure one above p. 3.

²See figure two below p. 5.



rived last year, (1969) there was only an average attendance of about thirty-two. Now the Sunday School is averaging over sixty-five persons per week.

Most of the persons attending Abundant Life are middle class white Americans. Yet there are a variety of life styles among the families in the congregation. Several families are well off financially; some own their homes, others rent. Recently, there has been an increase in young married couples with either one or two small children. There are about ten elderly persons; but most of the parents are comparatively young. The teen groups are growing each month.

One central quality that unifies these people is a determination to see Abundant Life be a successful work for Christ. A great feeling of love for one another and concern for all the persons in the church prevails among the congregation. This church is a group that is willing to sacrifice and give of themselves in order to be a part in the growth of a new church.¹

The Pastor

The Reverend Kenneth Crocker was reared in a small town in Alabama. At that time, before his conversion, one would not think of him being a minister when he grew up. Yet, through the redeeming power of Christ, he was changed and called into the ministry. After meeting Magdalene Kraft, a young lady evangelist, he married and traveled for some time

¹See the Sunday School development chart below p. 7.

— Average members	Average attendance—
— Average visitors	Average absentees —
— Average offering	Total offering —

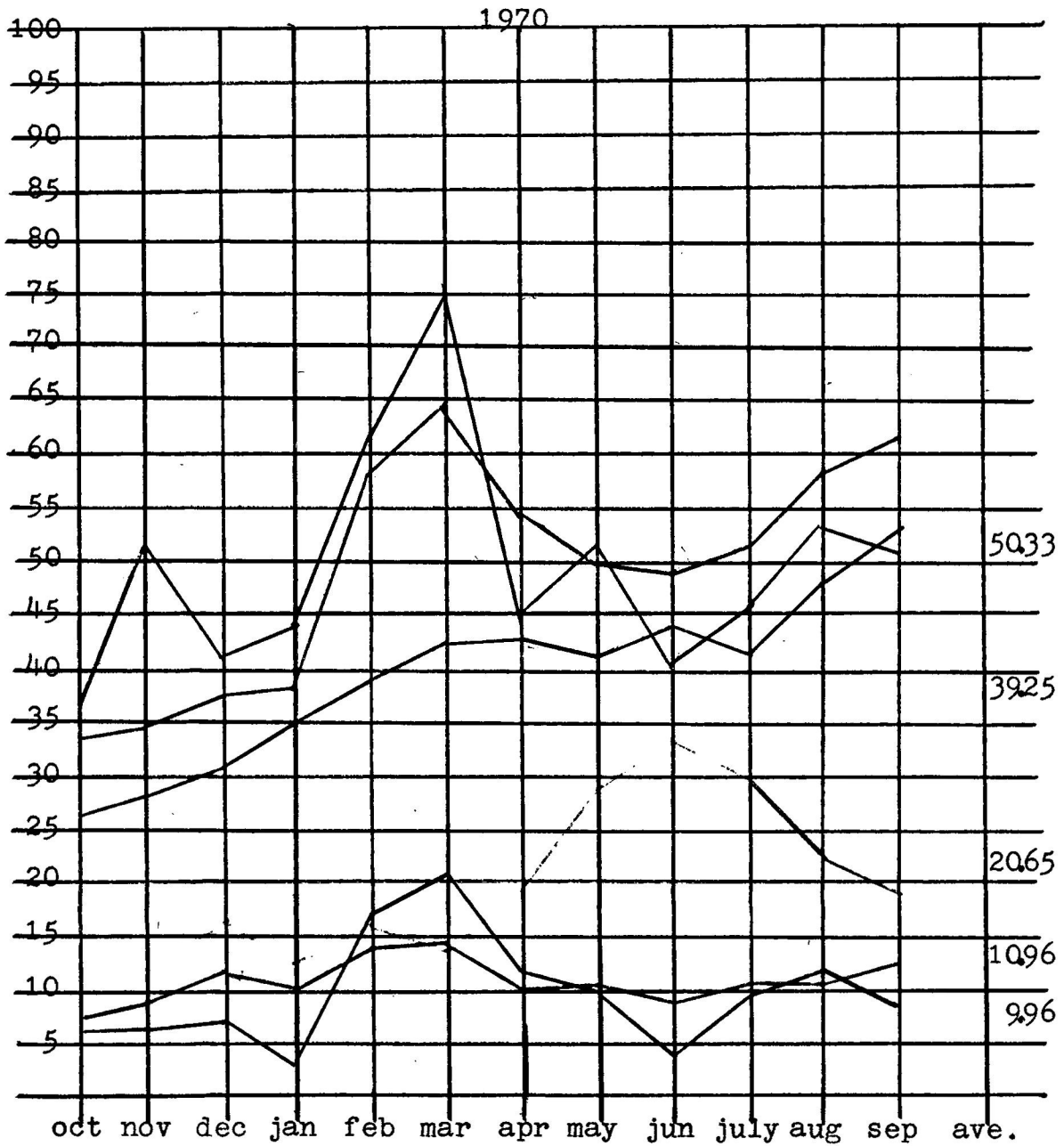


Fig. 3--Development of
Abundant Life Sunday School

with her as an evangelist. Later, he took churches in Mississippi and in other states before he felt called to build a church in the Atlanta area.

It has taken a man with great determination and character to withstand the pressures of building a modern structure like Abundant Life. The writer is sure that there has been many trying times, and much continuous pressure. Because of this pressure the Reverend Crocker has had to be a good financier in order to keep the church running. There has been very little personal reward. Much of the time there has been no salary for his work with the church. He has had to depend upon his skill as a commercial artist to provide a living for his wife and daughter.

Dispite the many disappointments, he has stayed true to his conviction and purpose to see a church built for God in the Atlanta area. He is about to see his dream come to completion, but the trying times will only relax when others join with him in putting their resources together to take part in the building of a church.

II. THE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

AT ABUNDANT LIFE

As it Relates to Mission, the Work of Christ

The relationship between education and mission is one of inseparable character. To the author there is no education in a Christian context unless it has as its goal and purpose the mission of God to the world through His church — the reconciliation of the whole world to Himself. Likewise there can not be a fulfillment of God's mission without training and education. By education the writer means change which takes place as a result of an encounter and continuing relationship with Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God as we are given witness through the Holy Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God Himself.

Mission is not just one more of many concerns to be assigned to some board of the church for implementation. It is the total church in action. "The church exists by mission as the fire exists by burning." Without mission, it has no excuse for existence. This is the people of God expressing God's loving concern for all men everywhere, calling all men also to become a part of the people of God. In order to carry effectively such a mission, the church must organize its life and work for that purpose.¹

In order to fulfill its mission, the Christian community provides its members training, guidance, admonition, support. As they accept the significance of their personal involvement in the body of Christ and of their mission, they find that their ministries are enriched,

¹A Cooperative Curriculum Project, The Church's Educational Ministry: A Curriculum Plan, p. 239. (Hence referred to as C.C.P.)

and empowered by the Holy Spirit.¹

These two statements taken from the Church's Educational Ministry (C.C.P.) suggest the purpose or goal of Christian education. Christians are educated for the purpose of sharing with others what God has given man through the work of His Son Jesus Christ. Part of that education is the development process of Christian living; but another basic part is the sharing with others what the Christian already knows through his encounter with God. This sharing takes place in the form of evangelism. This is the reaching out to others to help meet their needs; just as we have had our needs met by others sharing with us their experience and encounter with God. The Christian has something that is worth sharing and passing along. We also become responsible to others for what we have received. It is not just Christian privilege, but rather obligation and duty, to witness to others in so many various ways that which has been given to us by way of a witness. This witness reaches all the way back to Christ's witness to his disciples. Although, there have been, and still could be, those who receive the Christian message of redemption in other ways, it is God's purpose to have the Good News transmitted by human agents who are sent to do the will of God. Those who are sent may be called missionaries, but if they are, all who have accepted Christ as the way to reconciliation are missionaries. All are called and thus sent.

¹Ibid., p. 245

If one is not, he can not rightly be called Christian.¹

Christ has given a command to teach all nations,² and if one does not keep his commandments, but calls himself Christian, he is a liar.³ From this very command one can see the purpose of Christian education: To go into the world as one sent with a mission to point that world to the One who has been given authority to redeem the world — none other than Jesus Christ for "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."⁴

The mission aspect to Christian education can be seen also in the eight-fold statement of the International Council of Religious Education of 1940. It is as follows:

I. Christian education seeks to foster in growing persons a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience and a sense of personal relationship to him.

II. Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons such an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teaching of Jesus as will lead to experience of him as Saviour and Lord, loyalty to him and his cause, and will manifest itself in daily life and conduct.

III. Christian education seeks to foster in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christ like character.

IV. Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the building of a social order throughout the world embodying the ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

V. Christian education seeks to develop in grow-

¹David D. Baker and Nevin C. Harner, Missionary Education in Your Church, p. 22.

²Matt. 28:19.

³I John 2:4

⁴Acts 4:12

ing persons the ability and desposition to participate in the organized society of Christians—the church.

VI. Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons an appreciation of the meaning and importance of the Christian family and the ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the life of this primary social group.

VII. Christian education seeks to lead growing persons into a Christian interpretation of life and the universe; the ability to see in it God's purpose and plan; a life philosophy built on this interpretation.

VIII. Christian education seeks to effect in growing persons the assimilation of the best religious experience of the race, preeminently that recorded in the Bible, as effective guidance to present experience.¹

It is the work of Christian education to transmit the truth revealed through Christ that we should go to others, share with others, and have fellowship with those others. They in turn will go, share, and fellowship. At the center of this education and the very cause for Christian education is the driving, compelling force of the mission of God given to his Church. Thus, the purpose of Christian education is mission; and the very existence of Christian education depends on the existence of a mission started and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

In the book Missionary Education in Your Church the authors write concerning the goal of missionary education.

Missionary education is the sum of all our efforts to cultivate in children, young people, and adults a Christ like concern for people of every class, race, and nation; an intimate knowledge of how the Christian fellowship is being extended both at home and abroad; and a hearty participation in all endeavors to enlarge this fellowship of Christian faith and brotherhood until it covers the earth.²

¹H. W. Byrne, Christian Education in the Local Church, pp. 25-28, citing Christian Education Today pp. 16-17.

² Baker and Harner, op. cit., __.

These authors relate their statements to Christian education by holding that missionary education is an inseparable part of Christian education and that in truth Christian education without the mission ceases to be Christian.

The greatest example of mission as the goal of Christian education comes from the Great Teacher himself, Christ. When asked what the greatest command was, Jesus replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...you shall love your neighbor as yourself"¹ Jesus based his teaching in love for God and one's fellow man. Indeed, it was the very love of Christ that makes Christianity possible; and it is this same love, imparted to others, which is the beginning of mission and the goal of Christian education. Jesus taught his disciples love for God and mankind, and after the empowering of the Holy Spirit, his disciples spread this love to Jerusalem, Judea, Samarea, and the uttermost parts of the world, causing the Church to come into existence as a missionary Church.

Mission as the goal of Christian education is expressed most beautifully in John's writings when he wrote, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent the Son in to the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."²

¹Matt. 22:37-38.

²John 3:16 R.S.V.

Christ had a mission from the Father, and he gave a commission to his followers to tell others of his mission. This in itself is ample basis for stating that the recognition and acceptance of Christ's mission from the Father is the aim and goal of all Christian education. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love....love one another as I have loved you."¹ The goal of Christian education is to transmit this love to others— this is the mission of Christ and his Church.

As It Relates To The Meaning Of Christian Education

Christian education is education in a Christian frame of reference. The Survey of Religious Education defines education as coming from the Latin word "educer" which means "to lead out." Education, therefore, is a drawing out of the powers inherent in the person and developing them. This developing is a nurturing and a securing of proper responses. In Christian education the proper response is a maturing of Christ-like characteristics in individuals. Blanch Carrier words it in this manner: "to teach the Bible in such a way as to bring about a personal worship of God, a personal relationship to Christ and a personal experience in Christian living."² Thus, Christian education is a two way process by

¹John 15:6-12 R.S.V.

²Blanch Carrier, M.A., How Shall I Learn To Teach Religion, __.

which we try to have a confrontation experience with God and life, and have a positive response to that experience in the form of Christian witness. This can be done only by love which comes from God flowing through the teacher to the taught. One must be filled and overflowing with the spirit of Christian love. It is this love which produces meaningful Christian education.

The goal of Christian education stems from its definition. If Christian education is a process, the goal would be the culmination of that process. H. W. Byrne words it simply: "maturity of Christian character."¹ This includes a development of Christ-like character which comes from a reconciliation with God. The truth of the Scriptures is the inevitable evolvement.

As It Relates To The Denominational Purposes

The Assemblies of God came into being out of a fellowship of believers who had one central likeness. They all sought fellowship with others who had the experience of the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit." At first they were only a loosely knit group with hardly any centrality or organization. This trait caused much inefficiency. Therefore, a General Convention of Pentecostal Saints and Churches of God in Christ met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, April 2, 1914. At this time the guidelines for what was to become the Assemblies of God

¹Byrne, op. cit., p. 20.

were set up. In them the purpose for founding another organization was stated. This purpose is divided into five areas: (1) a better understanding of the teaching of proper doctrines: (2) conservation of the work that was being done at home and abroad; (3) a better understanding of the needs of missions on each field: (4) chartering the churches and abiding by the laws, thus uniting the movement; (5) and providing schools for the teaching of the Bible and providing a literary department to the movement.¹

From this first meeting, Assemblies of God Churches everywhere have banded together to fulfill these purposes. The emphasis upon mission in the Assemblies is a direct expression of meeting these purposes.

To be a part in aiding the work in these five areas could be the goal of every Assemblies of God. A great emphasis on active participation in the mission of Christ as expressed through evangelism, personal and social, has been the motivation for the Assemblies of God.

As It Relates To Human Characteristics And Needs

The characteristics and needs common to all persons include five general categories: (1) physical, (2) social, (3) emotional, (4) intellectual, and (5) spiritual. The Tools of Curriculum Development of the Church's Educational Ministry in its section on "Taxonomy of the Learner's Basic Needs" breaks the physical, social, and spiritual needs into detailed

¹Carl Brumback, Suddenly---From Heaven, p. 157.

areas. There, one can find examples such as reconciliation and eternal life as areas covered under spiritual needs.¹

Carrie Lou Goddard, in The Child and His Nurture goes into detail in describing the child in early, middle and later development. General areas which affect character and the understanding of the needs of children are mentioned.

The writer has found the Royal Rangers Leader's Manual to be an excellent source for giving detailed characteristics and needs which can apply to girls as well as boys. In the section "Understanding Boys" are specific characteristics for three distinct age groups: ages nine through eleven, twelve through fourteen, and fifteen through seventeen. Characteristics such as love of imitating, individualism in play, shortness of consciousness, acceptance of responsibility, etc. are given under these various groups.²

Regardless of the source, the need for love and understanding affects all persons everywhere. This should be the central awareness in relating human characteristics and needs to the goal of Christian education at Abundant Life.

When Christ-like concern is expressed, one will become sensitive to the needs of others. The command to "love thy neighbor as thyself" can only be fulfilled when one operates

¹Cooperative Curriculum Development, Tools of Curriculum Development of the Church's Educational Ministry, pp.23-36. (Hence referred to as C.C.D.)

²Gospel Publishing House, Royal Rangers Leader's Manual, pp. 23-29.

with the understanding of these needs. The goal of Christian education can only be Christian when it includes ministering to the needs of individuals with a knowledge of their personal and group characteristics.

III. OBJECTIVES FOR THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Statements Of The Objective

The objective for Christian education is that all persons be aware of God through his self-disclosure, especially his redeeming love as revealed in Jesus Christ, and that they respond in faith and love—to the end that they may know who they are and what their human situation means, grow as sons of God rooted in the Christian community, live in the Spirit of God in every relationship, fulfill their common discipleship in the world, and abide in the Christian hope.¹

This statement harmonizes with the one given by the Christian education department of the Assemblies of God. In Your Sunday School At Work by Richard L. Dresselhaus, seven parts of the objective are listed:

1. Salvation-- To lead each person into the experience of the new birth.
2. Biblical knowledge-- To help each person know, believe, and obey the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
3. Spirit-filled life-- To encourage each believer to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and maintain a Spirit-filled life.
4. Christian growth-- To help each believer grow toward Christian maturity.
5. Personal commitment-- To lead each believer into a continuing commitment of his life to the will of God.
6. Christian service-- To help each believer find and fulfill his place of service as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ.
7. Christian living-- To help each believer apply Christian principles to every relationship of life.²

For the purposes of this paper, the concepts incorporated in these two statements will be the guidelines, rather than the actual wording. To come to know Christ, grow as his

¹C.C.P. p. 8

²Richard Dresselhaus, Your Sunday School At Work, p. 40.

child, and live out one's life in every aspect according to the Scriptures is the underlying concepts in the objective of Christian education.

Four Areas The Objective Affects

The objective of Christian education affects worship by giving a purpose for worship other than self benefit. When the pastor keeps this objective in mind, he will structure a progressive, challenging worship service. He will make use of the Bible in leading worship; he will encourage worship that is an expression of the spirit-filled life.

When worship services genuinely allow persons to have an encounter with God, they are in keeping with the objective of Christian education. Yet, when a form of worship is presented that is not conducive to personal response to God in faith and love, or even when the form is conducive, but is not acted upon, then the objective of Christian education has not been met. Those leaders of the worship services must continuously evaluate those times of worship as to the effect the worship services have upon Christian education, and how an understanding of the objective will affect worship.

Instruction plays a major role in Christian education. One's knowledge of the Bible and Christian principles of living is directly affected by the education one has, formal or informal. The teacher of Christian education must at all times keep in mind the objective. When one plans instruction, the objective will give direction and a method of evaluation of what is to be taught.

With the objective of Christian education in mind, it is possible to develop organized, systematic instruction. This constitutes the curriculum. Only when a specific objective is held, can the curriculum have stability and meaningful purpose. It is in the curriculum that one finds what to teach; it is in the teacher that one discovers how to teach.

Even though a teacher has knowledge of teaching methods, he will not be his best until he allows the objective of Christian education to direct what methods to use and how he employs them. In this manner the objective has direct affect on instruction.

To the author, stewardship is the end result of effectively practicing the objective of Christian education in all its aspects. When one responds to Christ's redeeming love, stewardship immediately becomes a part of his life. His Christian growth develops directly in relationship to the type steward he is; living in the Spirit of God, and fulfilling his common discipleship are direct expressions of stewardship.

It is when one does not preceive the objective of Christian education and live in accordance with it, that his stewardship lacks. When one is constantly in keeping with the objective of Christian education, and he lets the objective be a means of self-evaluation, he will find his stewardship being what the Word of God and the Christian community expect it to be.

Applying the objective of Christian education affects the fellowship of the church. Fellowship can only come about

when persons have ideologies and interests that empress themselves in compatible ways. By making the objective of Christian education the basis for fellowship, the church can fellowship more readily. When persons are endeavoring to live and grow together as sons of God, fellowship becomes spontaneous.

On the other hand, when persons have no central objective in common, when their lives have no common point of likeness, fellowship is almost impossible. When one person is endeavoring to live in the Spirit in every relationship, and another is taken up with selfish aims and goals, fellowship is very unlikely.

Thus, there can be no fellowship as a Christian, unless the objective of Christian education is actively being practiced. When persons unite together with like objectives, the natural fellowship flows forth one to the other. To try to bring this about without common objectives is a hopeless effort.

Long-term Objectives

The first long term objective to be considered is what is known as evangelism. By evangelism the active outreach of the church to spread the Gospel, the making of provisions for an encounter with Christ, and the following up with concern for Christian growth are meant. In other words, actively being involved in the mission of the Church is the work of evangelism. It is the purpose for building a church structure that those who gather together in it might go into their daily

world and take the message of the power of Christ to others. It is the objective of Abundant Life that its congregation will share with others what they have experienced in their relationship with Christ. In this manner they will be fulfilling the objective of evangelism.

Secondly, to nurture those who respond to the witness of Christ is an objective. This nurturing means that those who respond in faith and love will grow in Christ through worship, instruction, stewardship, and fellowship, in order that they might be a witness in their world to the change and effect Christ had, and continues to have, on their lives. Through Christian nurture, Abundant Life will be able to see growth that counts for the kingdom of God. Persons who have had a responsive encounter with God may grow physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

To develop persons so that they may take responsible leadership is the third objective for Abundant Life. Thus far, the church has had to depend on only a very few persons who could fulfill positions of leadership. Now with increased growth it is imperative that the church develop leadership from within. This development of leadership will enable the church to make use of its present personal resources, without having to depend on outside assistance. When leaders are developed within the church in a consistent manner, then the church will become self-sufficient.

Finally, the quality of teaching is important as a long-term objective. As leadership is developed, up-to-date tech-

niques are learned, and personal character enriched in the teachers, the quality of teaching will be strengthened. In this manner a complete self-sufficient organization can be achieved, which will put into practice the objectives of Christian education.

Short-Term Objectives

The short-term objectives are specific aims that can be achieved within the authors work at Abundant Life. These presented here are not all inclusive of the present aims of the total church program, but rather, they are the objectives the writer has worked with while in his position of leadership at Abundant Life. It is his major aim to put a workable Sunday School program for all ages into effect.

Under this main objective comes several others. First, it has been the immediate aim of the author to provide a Sunday morning teaching experience which is geared to each age level. In this manner the over all objective can be more readily realized. By providing teaching experiences which are taylored to smaller age spans, more and better learning can take place. The desired age level divisions for the time the writer will be working in the church are: (1) Infant Nursery ages new born to one, (2) Toddlers' Nursery ages two to three, (3) Beginners ages four to six, (4) Primaries ages seven to nine, (5) Juniors ages ten to twelve (6) Teen I ages thirteen to fourteen, (7) Teen II ages fifteen to seventeen or eighteen, (8) Young Adults, and (9) Adults.

The next aim is a visitation work that is an extension of the Sunday Church School. This would involve three phases. First, all absentees would be contacted during the week and a report made to a coordinator the following Sunday as to the reason for absence. Secondly, a report of visitors is given to the pastor who in turn will follow-up either by letter, bullitin, or personal visit. Finally, a report of those who were wll the previous Sunday will also be given to the pastor to follow-up and make sick calls. In this manner both members and new comers will be in constant contact with the leaders of the church.

A third aim is the training of both present and new workers. The present workers are aided in understanding their job better, while new workers are taught the duties, responsibilities, and methods of their position.

Finally, it is an aim of the writer to establish educational departments of the Church School. These departments would include Royal Rangers for boys, Missionetts for girls, and Childrens' Church for smaller boys and girls. Royal Rangers and Missionetts are activity groups, while Childrens' Church teaches children how to take part in worship as well as have activities.

IV. METHODS OF ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES

The Program Viewed As A Method

Because of the historical background of many persons in the Assemblies of God, programming has not been looked upon favorably. Many persons came from churches which had a variety of programs that did not meet human needs. To these persons no program was better than a program that was ill suited to their needs. They preferred unstructured meetings which allowed for individual expression and spontaneous worship.

As time past however, a tradition developed that was not based on sound educational principles. Many persons began to feel a lack of Bible knowledge and a Christian philosophy of life that would enable them to be overcoming Christians. They discovered that planning ahead and working with others to have well balanced Christian instruction called for programs that were suited to the needs of individual congregations.

Because of a knowledge of this history, the writer feels that programs are only methods of achieving objectives and goals in Christian education. Just as any other method such as lecturing, or using audio-visuals, if a program does not meet the needs of the persons to whom it is presented, it should be changed.

Thus, the following programs are group situations which

are in themselves methods for achieving the objectives of Christian education at Abundant Life.

Brief History Of Development

Because Abundant Life is a very young church, its Christian education history is brief. Mainly, education has gone on in the form of worship and instruction. There has been morning worship, evening evangelistic, and mid-week prayer services. Also a small Sunday School has been in process. Yet, through the process of constructing a new church, stewardship has been taught indirectly. It has taken faithfulness and personal integrity of character to remain in a new growing church.

Present Structures

Each of the following organizations or programs is designed to meet more than one objective. All of the objectives listed previously can be found in each individual program, but for the purposes of this paper, only the primary objectives will be mentioned.

The first program is in the form of a class situation. This is presently being given during the Sunday School time and in conjunction with the Church School. The major purpose of this situation is instruction. This instruction includes topics from the Bible, problems in daily living such as family unity, home life, family life, and basic issues facing the Christian today such as war, race, etc.

The methods for achieving this purpose will include lec-

tures, discussion, panels, guest speakers, question and answer periods, films, pictures, charts, book reviews and role plays. To apply these methods will require some of the group to readjust their thinking processes, and therefore, must be applied gradually and with genuine concern for all involved.

Worship Experiences are next. The purpose of these experiences is to relate daily life with a sincere, genuine, spiritual relationship with God. It is desired that the student will have personal communion and individual expression of that communion with God; and a living relationship with God, through Christ, by the functioning of the Holy Spirit.

Methods for accomplishing this purpose will include music, preaching, prayer, Scripture reading, singing in groups and by individuals. Emphasis will be placed on the individual meeting God on a spiritual and emotional plane as well as the intellectual sphere. This will be done in a group and in an individual setting.

To the author, worship is to God. However, the effects and result of worship reach out to others in Christian edification. This includes forming and maintaining proper relationships with others at home, school, work, and in church. This is true stewardship, for it is the natural outcome of worship to God. In this time of worship the Christian is renewed and remolded in character and attitude. Christian edification is reciprocal. When one gives and shares his experiences with others, he builds and molds himself as well as them.

An informal atmosphere is needed to obtain this type of worship. It must be spontaneous and a natural response of true feelings. Some means of obtaining these objectives would be retreats, cottage prayer meetings, family altar worship and an informal setting at church. Testimony, sharing of mutual experiences, gospel singing, Scripture exposition, creative writing, song composition, and making use of individual talents in general are some of the methods for obtaining this kind of worship. This worship offers a means of coming out of ones self, and giving the total being to God and to the betterment of the Christian community.

Evangelism is an intrinsic part of this church's background and purpose. It opens avenues for the act and expression of a conversion experience whether instantaneous or gradual. Another method to achieve the objective of evangelism is a marked decision to be stewards of the "Good News" concerning the redemptive character of Jesus Christ. Some of the activities in the evangelistic outreach would include personal testimony, enrollment and attendance at church, visitation and follow-up of absentees, religious census, outpost and mission schools, special days for evangelistic ministry, and missionary activities at home and abroad.

Christian activities are for meeting the needs of others as well as church members. The main purpose is a concrete expression of Christian stewardship. Means for meeting this purpose would include a well planned program of visitation which would reach out to church members and non-members alike.

The program would extend into hospitals, nursing homes, individual homes of needy families, schools, and the armed forces; also, it would include personal visits, letters, phone calls and prayerful concern for all in the reach of the church.

Another purpose for activities is the development of Christian character. At present the Royal Ranger program is the only specific group that is fulfilling this function. By means of weekly meetings other than Sunday, basic character building is instilled in young teens. Games, competitive advancements, camping, and various skills are all employed in the Royal Ranger program.

Men's Fellowship is not just a time of leisure and relaxation, although it includes these. Fellowship is a practical course of instruction in the basic art of existence: living together as God intended man to live. The major purpose of fellowship is to use one's leisure time in creative, useful ways that will bring honor to the purpose of God, and refreshing to the mind, spirit and body. Some means for accomplishing this purpose would include camping and other sports, working on a project together, and enjoying meals together. At times of fellowship true character is revealed and molded. It is here that a true Christian spirit is formed and cultivated. In these leisure moments comes the real expression of values formed in worship, instruction and stewardship. It is here that Christian education plants the seed and harvest the crops of true Christian character.

Women's Fellowship includes the basic purposes and ac-

complishments as that of the men. The basic difference would be in adapting the program to the characteristics and needs of the ladies in particular. Interest such as sewing and other hobbies would be examples of this adaptation.

IV. THE WRITER'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROGRAM

The Scope of His Work

It is the authors responsibility at Abundant Life to develop a Christian education program in helping with the goals and objectives of Chriatian education within the Assemblies of God, and Abundant Life specifcly. This development must also take into account the development of the total church situation as well. This puts limitations upon what can actually be done in the programming. The church is greatly limited by finance because of the heavy building debt, yet, progress has been made in definite areas.

The writer holds the title of Sunday School Superintendent, but his actual duties involve that of Christian education director, because he works in other areas also which are not directly associated with the Sunday School. Thus, the scope of his work deals with the Sunday School directly, and all other aspects of Christian education indirectly.

Results Of Fulfilling This Role

The results of fulfilling this role have been both encouraging and disappointing. The major encouragement has been that of seeing the total church develop from ministering to thirty or so persons to seventy some.¹ In a year's time

¹See fig. 3.above p. 7.

the church has doubled its members, and almost doubled the total attendance.

Another encouraging part has been working with such dedicated people. The teachers in Sunday School, and workers in other areas of church have grown greatly in their abilities. They have cooperated with every effort the writer has put forth, and have endeavored to put into practice the ideas to which they have been exposed..

Also, the writer feels that the church is already beginning to see results of dedicated ministry. Several persons have been added to the Kingdom of Christ. Others have grown from a selfish, bitter attitude about life to a loving caring attitude. They have let the love of Christ penetrate their beings so that they may now be able to draw out of themselves and include others in their life.

The greatest encouragement has been in seeing the members desiring to broaden their own ministry to include other persons in the community in the church. An active visitation program is now being practiced. Before, there has only been spasmodic attempts on the part of the members to reach beyond their present community. Now genuine concern for others is motivating the members to reach beyond the status quo.

Yet, there has been disappointments. The church has failed to keep many families that have come for a short while, because people were too taken up with their own problems. Even though the building is almost completed, there are crowded classes in the Sunday School. There is more space

available, but it is not usable at the present time. Finances have been so short that needed equipment has not been able to be purchased.

There is still a lack of appreciation for structured organization which plans ahead and sets long range goals and objectives. This feeling is receding gradually, but it is still prominent among the leaders of the church. However, the progress of the church over the past year has convinced others that organization pays off.

Projects Which Have Been Incorporated In The Author's Work

Since his work dealt mainly with the Sunday School, the author will begin with a description of what he has done there. Basically, his efforts have been directed toward adding more classes to the program. A description of the classes are as follows:

Teen I.-- This class was the first addition to the program. Before, all teens ages thirteen to nineteen were in one class. This caused a great diversity which hindered the teaching process. After the class was started, both of the new classes which developed as a result of the split grew and added new zeal to the Sunday School.

Nursery.-- At first the young mothers had to hold their babies during the entire church service. There was no place provided to care for the child. Then, cribs were placed in the Beginner class room. This made it difficult for the Beginner class; and the parents could only use the room at times

other than during Sunday School.

After the Sanctuary was compleated, a Nursery was built. Now the mothers seldom leave their children with the attendant. It is not because of distrust, but rather out of habit that they prefer to keep their children with them. As time passes, this trend is changing. Regulations have made this service more stable, thus, bringing about more desired results.

Junior.-- This class developed out of a combined Primary-Junior class. It has not grown much. The teacher is trying various ways of creating interest, but the problem lies in the parents, not the pupils. Special visitation is being used to try to change this situation.

Young Adult.-- Realizing the tremendous potential in the young adult, the church felt that a special class for this group would be for the betterment of the whole church. As a result the outreach of the church has been broadened and much unity has been enhanced.

The resources for teachers has been low in the past, but now new persons are attending the church and are expressing interest in leadership. Making use of these persons, and finding where they best work is a great task for the church.

Some of the special events which the author initiated include:

"C" Day.-- This was the best function of the entire church since The author has been there. The celebration of moving into the auditorium was the occasion. Record breaking attendance brought more than satisfaction to our goal of one-



Fig. 4--Pastor and Wife on
Old Fashion Day

hundred.¹ Ever since that time the church has grown and the crisis of founding a new church was past.

Fill-A-Row Day.-- This event occurred in the early Spring. The object was to have each family be in charge of filling one row in the auditorium. The response was not as it should have been. Persons did not actively work at inviting others to come on that date. From this and other events, the author has concluded that for the present the best method of working with this church is by having each class work on one common goal without competing with each other.

Old Fashion Day.-- Held in July close to Independence Day, the time for remembering the past had come. With special dress, special old fashion dinner on the grounds, and old fashion preaching the occasion was a delight and thrill for everyone. The attendance was not as good as expected due to illness, etc., but the enthusiasm generated from this effort made definite gains in the fellowship, growth, and direction of the church.²

Teacher Appreciation Day.-- A long awaited thank-you was given recently to all the teaching and secretarial staff at Abundant Life. A personal card was given to each teacher and the church honored them with applause and sincere prayer of dedication.

¹"C" in "C" Day is taken from the Latin numeral C meaning one-hundred.

²See fig. 4 above p. 36.

Special instruction was given to the leaders of the church at various times. This has been needed in order to keep the teachers working effectively and provide added knowledge to their abilities. Included in this instruction were the following:

Monthly Teachers' Meetings.-- Each month the author gathered the teachers together after morning worship time. We discussed any problems that had come about and possible solutions. The author tried to encourage the teachers and aid them in their work. This has brought about a feeling of esteem and worthiness. The teachers are beginning to look at their task as a ministry rather than a duty.

Semi-annual Workers' Training Course.-- For the first time Abundant Life has been offered added resources to teaching and leadership skills. The course "Foundations for Christian Service" was taught last October in 1970. The writer wrote and taught this course, and he feels from the evaluation that the workers gave of it that it met a great need among them.¹

Another course which will incorporate the manual "Your Sunday School at Work" will emphasize techniques for leading a group. This is scheduled to be taught this coming April, 1971.

Other projects in which the writer has been involved and has lead are the ordering of literature, keeping a monthly

¹See appendix I below for an outline of the course.

chart on Sunday School averages,¹ promoting an ushering team, and organizing a visitation program.

Persons other than the author have worked with him on all of these projects and events, but he has taken leadership in these areas.

One final ministry the author has enjoyed has been working with the Royal Rangers, the Assemblies of God boys' program. He headed a local outpost at Abundant life in which the group has taken camping trips, climbed the side of Stone Mountain and learned living principles through Bible study and activities.

Also, he has had the privilege of working as an advisor at the first Junior Leadership Training Camp to ever be held for Royal Rangers. His duties included teaching a first aid class and aiding the trainees in developing skills at working as a patrol.²

¹See fig. 3, p. 7.

²See appendix II for some material used in the class

VI. FUTURE HOPES FOR THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

AT ABUNDANT LIFE

There is great potential even now among the members at Abundant Life. Each month brings forth even greater possibilities for the church. Financial stability is close at hand, comparatively speaking; and the church will be able to lay aside the hinderances which have hampered its development thus far.

Being critically located, the church has come into being at an opportune time. Housing is being built all around the area. New families are moving within the reach of the church. The church is growing in strength to where it will be able to reach out into the community.

Continued growth will only be possible if this church will continue to organize its efforts. If the organizational structure that is presently in existence does not continue to expand and broaden, development will not amount to its highest possibility.

Yet, with each individual working together for the community of Christ, more and better plans can be made to meet the needs of others. With proper leadership, guidance, and direction, Abundant Life will be in a position to glorify the Kingdom of God.

APPENDIX I

Outline For

"Foundations For Christian Service"

- A. The foundation of proper relationships: love and edification.
 - 1. Person to God.
 - 2. Person to person.
 - 3. Person to self
 - 4. The interrelationship.
- B. The foundation of proper knowledge.
 - 1. Knowledge of God's Word.
 - 2. Knowledge of correct doctrine.
 - 3. Knowledge of personal needs.
 - 4. Knowledge of teaching methods
- C. The foundation of proper goals.
 - 1. The goal of Christ's Kingdom.
 - 2. The goal of Christian education.
 - 3. The goal of abundant Life: methods for achievement.
 - 4. The goal of personal involvement.
- D. The foundation of proper evaluation.
 - 1. Evaluation of one's self-- personal.
 - 2. Evaluation of one's actions-- communication.
 - 3. Evaluation of one's group-- interaction.
 - 4. Evaluation of one's program-- goal achievement.
- E. Review and fellowship.

APPENDIX II

F I R S T A I D A T A G L A N C E

Ailment	Sings and Symptoms	First Aid
1. Poison (First Aid)	Abdominal pain, convulsions, vomiting, often deep sleep (coma), burn around the lips.	Check container for antidote. Call a doctor. For most cases dilute with large quantities of liquids and induce vomiting. If acid, alkali, Kerosene, do not induce vomiting, but give vegetable oil or egg white.
2. Shock	Skin is pale and moist. Breathing shallow and irregular. Pulse weak and rapid.	Lying position with head down and turned to side in case of vomiting. Keep victim from chilling. If no head or chest injuries raise lower part of body.
3. Fractures and Dislocations	Pain, swelling, tenderness, deformity.	Keep injured part quiet. Treat for shock.
4. Burns	Skin is Red-1st degree, Blistered-2nd degree, Charred-3rd degree	Keep clean and cover with thick steril pads. Treat for shock.
5. Common Emergencies	Example: heart attack or epileptic convulsions	Make patient comfortable and send for help as fast as possible.
6. Foreign object in Eye, ear, or nose.	Discomfort, Irritation.	Eye- if not penetrating remove with clean handkerchief. Otherwise, send for doctor. Ear and Nose- Take to a doctor if object is not expelled.
7 Unconsciousness	Unresponsive	Keep victim lying down, head turned to the side. Send for a doctor if victim does not regain consciousness. If breathing stops give artificial respiration.

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